

specifications that could boost crumb rubber use significantly (discussed in the following pages); the Tire Incentive Program (providing 5 to 40 cents per pound to manufacturers using crumb rubber); the Rubberized Pavement Grant Program and technical assistance program; the Tire-Derived Product Grant Program; the Tire Outreach and Market Analysis Program; and the Feedstock Conversion Services contract (providing product testing, technical support, and other services). Following are more details on each crumb rubber category.

Paving

In 2015, use of California-produced crumb rubber in paving applications was up 12 percent to 3.9 million PTEs. Industry representatives indicate this was due to somewhat higher use by both Caltrans and local agencies, and that this trend toward somewhat higher use is continuing in early 2016.

Caltrans is responsible for a large portion of rubber pavement applications in California. The Department is required by statute (AB 338, Levine, Chapter 709, Statutes of 2005) to use tire rubber in 35 percent of its paving projects, for an average of 11.6 pounds per metric ton of total asphalt paving materials used. Prior to 2015 this statute specifically required use of rubber asphalt or “field blend,” (also referred to as the “wet process”). But as of January 2015, Caltrans may use any paving technology to achieve the required levels. To date, Caltrans has used other paving technologies incorporating crumb rubber, such as the “terminal blend” process, far less than field blend applications. However, terminal blend material containing crumb rubber can be used in a range of products, including hot mix, warm mix, slurry seals, and chip seals.

While Caltrans has not yet released its annual report on its use of waste tires in 2015, the previous report estimated that in 2014, 2.7 million PTEs were consumed, an amount that translates to 34.2 million pounds of crumb rubber (based on a standardized conversion of 12 pounds of crumb rubber per PTE used by Caltrans and CalRecycle), with rubberized asphalt used in 26.7 percent of projects.⁹ This was up from 23 percent in 2013, but much lower than the 34 percent reported in 2011. This higher rate was based on approved rubber paving projects, but Caltrans now estimates crumb rubber use based on actual completed projects.

According to Caltrans representatives, the total amount of paving has been substantially reduced over the last few years as federal stimulus funding and special bond funding was exhausted. In 2011, for example, Caltrans representative report 2.6 million tons of rubber hot mix asphalt was applied, but this level fell to 1 million tons in 2013. This trend has continued and paving levels are not expected to rebound to the levels of 2011 in the foreseeable future. However, the paving that is occurring is mainly maintenance-related as opposed to new pavements, which favors the use of rubber asphalt products. A small

⁹ “2014 Annual Report on Caltrans’ Use of Waste and Used Tires.” Available online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/rescons/sb876.htm>.